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CONTENTS.

Men ought always to pray	128	Improper instruction to an awakened sinner	149
The Testimony of the Scriptures to the Perseverance of Saints	134	Parochial Visits	151
Question,—What is intended by sine of ignorance	140	John Rogers, the Proto-Martyr under Queen Mary	152
Reply to Xanthus	142	Ordinations and Installations	157
Contentment	148	Poetry—Solitude	157
		To Correspondents and Readers	158

CONDITIONS.

1. THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE shall contain 32 octavo pages, be executed as it respects type and paper in the style of the Christian Spectator, and afforded to subscribers at \$1,50 a volume, payable in advance ; or \$2 paid at the end of six months.

2. Those who become responsible for five copies shall receive the sixth gratis.

3. No subscriptions are to be taken for less than a year ; and if notice of discontinuance is not given before the issuing of the last number, subscribers will be considered as desiring it the succeeding year.

4. This volume shall be published in Boston ; and though it will contain no more pages, it shall comprise considerably more matter, than either of the preceding volumes.

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FOR THE PROPRIETORS.

1826.

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MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY.

PRAYER has always been so disagreeable to a depraved heart, that men have exerted all their ingenuity to justify themselves in neglecting this reasonable duty. Some argue against it, from the nature and perfections of the Deity. They say he knows too much to need to be informed of their wants. They say he is too good to need to be asked or solicited to bestow what he sees best to bestow. And they say he is too immutable to be moved by their prayers or supplications. From these premises they draw the conclusion, that they are under no necessity or obligation to pray for divine favours. But they more generally plead their own depravity and inability, as an excuse for restraining prayer before God. They say they are forbidden to pray wrong, and they are unable to pray right; therefore it is not their duty to pray at all. Now, if there were any weight in any of these objections against the duty of prayer, Christ must have known it; for he knows what was in God and what was in man. But from a perfect knowledge of the character and perfections of God, and of the character and condition of men, and of their mutual relations to each other, he drew this just and im-

portant conclusion, "that men *ought* always to pray, and not to faint." In illustrating the sentiment contained in this conclusion, I shall show what prayer is—prove it to be a duty incumbent on all men—and point out when it ought to be performed.

1. What is true prayer?

According to a common and well known definition, "prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will." This definition seems to be a little deficient; because it does not distinguish a *good*, from a *bad* prayer. A man destitute of grace, may offer up desires for things agreeable to the will of God. He may pray for life, or health, or holiness; all which are things agreeable to the divine will, in their own nature; but his desires for such things are altogether selfish and criminal. A better definition of prayer may be given in these words: Prayer is the offering up to God holy or proper desires for things agreeable to his will. By desires here, we are to understand, all virtuous or benevolent affections of the heart, whether holy love, or holy fear, or holy gratitude, or holy joy, or holy sorrow. There is no gracious affection but what may be expressed, either in adoration, confession, petition, intercession, or thanksgiv-

ing. True prayer consists in the expression of right affections. Expression, I say, because desires or affections, which are *not expressed*, cannot be considered as prayer. In the most secret and spontaneous ejaculations, the suppliant puts his desires or feelings into words. There is, therefore, a real distinction between prayer and mere meditation. 'Men may meditate upon God, or Christ, or any divine or religious object, without using any language at all; but they cannot pray in secret, private, or public, without clothing their thoughts and affections in words. It is only in words, that the affections of the heart can be offered up to God in prayer. So that one thing necessarily implied in prayer, is an actual *expression* of the desires of the heart, respecting *proper* objects. No person may desire what he knows God will not grant, nor ask him to alter his designs, or work a miracle in favour of himself, or others. But when men have *proper* feelings towards *proper* objects, they may express them before God, and their expression of them will be a true, sincere prayer. But in asking for any favour at the hands of God, with propriety, submission is always implied, or a willingness that God should grant, or deny it. There is no difference in this respect, between asking for private or public, temporal or spiritual blessings. We never know before hand, what favours it is best, all things considered, that God should grant or deny, and we should always ask with unreserved submission. And no person, in the exercise of right affections, can pray for any thing absolutely, that is, without a desire that God should either grant or deny what

he requests, as shall be most for his glory. This is a short, but we believe, a full and just description of such a prayer as is always acceptable to God. I now proceed to prove,

2. That it is the duty of all men to pray, or to offer up *proper* desires to God, for things agreeable to his will. Our Saviour taught this doctrine in the most plain and appropriate terms. "He spake a parable to this end, that men *ought* always to pray, and not to faint." *Ought* is the most proper term to express *duty* or moral obligation. There is nothing but duty, that men *ought* to do, and therefore whatever they *ought* to do is *duty*. Christ says *men*, that is *all* men, without distinction of character, ought to pray. And that this is true, will appear from the following considerations:—

From the nature of things. There is a mutual, and immutable relation between God and all mankind. He is their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and they are his dependent and rational creatures. This mutual relation lays all men under moral obligation to feel and express their constant and entire dependence on God for life, for health, for holiness, and for happiness. They are indebted to him for all the good they have ever enjoyed, and are dependent on him for all the good they shall ever need in time to come. This they are under moral obligation to feel and to express. If they feel as they ought to feel, they will love God for the perfections of his nature, the blessings of his providence, and the gifts of his grace; and offer up to him the gratitude, the submission, and homage of their hearts. While God remains what he is, and they remain what they

are, they must be under indispensable moral obligations to give him the worship and glory which are due to his name. As all men stand in the same relation to God, whether they are holy or unholy, obedient or disobedient; so their obligation to prayer cannot be dissolved. It is founded in their relation to God, which must remain as long as they exist free, accountable, moral agents. Neither the goodness nor badness of their hearts, destroys their moral agency and accountability, and consequently cannot destroy their moral and immutable obligation to offer up proper desires to God, for things agreeable to his will. Their obligation to this duty does not depend upon their disposition, but upon their rational capacity. The bare knowledge of their relation to and dependence on God, creates a moral obligation to glorify him as God, by paying him the supreme homage of their hearts. So that sinners are as naturally, constantly and immutably bound to pray to God, as saints are. As prayer is a duty which results from the nature of things, so it is binding on all men of all ages, characters, and conditions.

The bare light of nature teaches that all men ought to pray. Whatever is right or wrong in the nature of things may be discovered to be so, by the light of nature. The light of nature teaches all men that murder is a crime. The barbarians who saw the viper on Paul's hand, supposed he was a murderer and ought not to live. It is right in the nature of things to speak the truth, and all men may discover it to be so, by the light of nature. And in the same way all nations have discovered prayer to be a duty. The mariners with Jonah, in a

storm at sea, called upon him, and every one, to call upon his God. Though they were heathens, yet the light of nature taught them that every man ought to pray to the being whom he acknowledged to be his God. As every nation which has been discovered in the most remote parts of the earth, have acknowledged some divinity or supreme invisible power, so all nations unite in the belief of the duty of prayer. Whether they ever would have acknowledged the excellence of any divine being, had it not been for tradition, is another question. But since they have acknowledged the existence of a Deity, they have discovered, by the light of nature, that prayer is a duty, which they owe to him. Though mankind have greatly, if not generally, neglected to call upon God, it is no evidence that they have not believed this to be their duty; for we know they have neglected all other known duties. It is sufficient to know, that all men in distress, and beyond the reach of human help, have always been disposed to call upon their God for aid and relief. This universal consent of all nations in all ages, to the duty and obligation of prayer, is a strong evidence that it is founded in the nature of things, discoverable by the light of nature, and binding upon every individual of the human race. Besides,

It is not only founded in the nature of things and discoverable by the light of nature, but expressly and abundantly enjoined in the word of God. David calls upon all men to worship their Maker. "O come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Christ said, "It is written, thou shalt wor-

ship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And he himself taught, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Again he said to those whom he instructed, "Watch ye, therefore, and *pray always*." And it is enjoined upon men "to be instant in prayer, to continue in prayer, to pray without ceasing, and to pray always with all prayer and supplication." Paul says, "I will that all men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The bible not only abounds with such plain injunctions upon all men to pray, but enforces the duty by the examples of the greatest and best of men. Noah, Job, and Daniel, gave themselves to prayer; and so did Moses, David, and Samuel, together with the prophets, apostles, and even Christ himself. These examples have the sanction of divine approbation, and carry the weight of divine authority. It is difficult to conceive, that any should read and believe the bible, and not believe that they are divinely required to make known their wants to God, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. All men are bound to pray, by every kind of obligation, by which they are bound to perform any other duty. It only remains to show,

3. When they ought to pray. Christ says *always*, and so says the Holy Spirit in several passages which have been cited. But none can suppose, that such expressions are to be understood in the strictest sense, and therefore they need some explanation. They may mean that men ought always to live in a praying frame, or live in the continual exercise of such virtuous and pious affections, as may be properly expres-

sed in prayer. Or they may rather mean, that prayer is not a mere *occasional*, but a *perpetual* duty, which ought to be constantly performed from day to day, through the whole course of life. This is most certainly true, and leads me to observe,

That men ought to pray *whenever* they become acquainted with God. Multitudes of mankind live and die without the knowledge of the true God, and indeed of any other. But it is always absurd to pray to an unknown God, either in a heathen, or christian land. And among those who live in a christian land, some come to the knowledge of God much sooner than others. Children know some duties much earlier than the duty of prayer; and some, whose religious education is neglected, live long without knowing God, and the duty of calling upon his name. The time to begin to pray, therefore, is as soon as any come to the knowledge of God, whether in childhood, youth, or riper years. The knowledge of God, gives the knowledge of the duty of prayer, and as soon as any know this duty, they are under moral obligation to perform it. If men ought *always* to pray, then they ought to pray as soon as they are capable of it; and they are capable of it, as soon as they have any just conception of the being and perfections of God, in whom they live, and move, and have their being. Did parents but properly instruct their children, with respect to religion, they would early become acquainted with God, and feel their obligations to call upon his name. And as soon as any, however young, become acquainted with God, they ought immediately to go to God

and pour out their hearts before him in grateful, humble, penitential prayer.

Men ought to pray every day. We know that there were morning and evening sacrifices appointed under the Law, at which times, the people stood in the outer court praying. There appears to be the same propriety in praying morning and evening under the Gospel, as under the Law. David said to God, "Every day will I bless thee." And again he said, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Every person, every morning, has occasion to look up to God for his guidance, protection and influence through the day; and in the evening, he has the same occasion to give thanks to God for all the favours he has bestowed upon him the day past. Daily duties and daily mercies call for daily prayers and praises. What is proper for a person, in this case, is equally proper for a family. Every family are dependent on God every day for family favours, and need to seek to God every morning, and thank God for them every evening. The prayer which Christ taught his disciples to use every day, was evidently designed as a model of social family prayer, in which he enjoins it upon every family to pray for pardon, and every other blessing which they need every day. Every family, whether rich or poor, high or low, have need to pray every day, "give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." These are daily blessings, which call for daily prayers and

thanksgivings. God has, either directly or indirectly, clearly pointed out morning and evening as the proper seasons for men to come into his presence every day, and ask for his mercy. These seasons ought to be held sacred, and punctually observed for secret and social prayer. No common business, nor company, can be a sufficient excuse for neglecting, either morning or evening, the duty of either secret or social prayer. And none, who properly realize their dependence on God, and the endearing obligation they are under to the Father of mercies, will easily forego the duty and privilege of calling upon him at the seasons he has appointed, and they have devoted to religious services.

Men ought to pray *occasionally* as well as *daily*. God often calls men to this duty, by the peculiar dispensations of providence. He sometimes smiles, and sometimes frowns, on individuals, on families, and on large communities. Such signal dispensations, whether merciful or afflictive, ought to be devoutly and prayerfully acknowledged. When God bestows any great and unexpected favour upon any one, he has just occasion to thank and praise him for the peculiar expression of his goodness. On such an occasion David said, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Though a day of prosperity be a day of joy, it is no less a day of danger, which calls for prayer as well as gratitude. But if a day of uncommon prosperity calls for occasional prayer, much more a day of uncommon adversity. And so the scripture represents it. God says to every man, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt

glorify me." And the apostle James says, "Is any man afflicted, let him pray." Good men of old, made a practice of praying occasionally. We find many instances of their occasional prayers recorded in scripture, for the instruction and admonition of future ages. Jacob made an occasional prayer, in a time of extreme danger and distress. When his brother Esau pursued him, with full intent to destroy him and his family, he wrestled with God and prevailed. "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and the God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will dwell with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." This was a prayer of faith in the express promises of God, and was most graciously answered. When God proposed it to Moses, to destroy Israel for making and worshipping the golden calf, he expected that Moses would intercede for them, and therefore said to him, "Let me alone, that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses besought the Lord his God, on that distressing occasion, and said, "Lord, why dost thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of

the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people: Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord *repented* of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." I might mention the occasional prayer of David, when he saw the sword of the angel of the Lord drawn to destroy Jerusalem, and when he fled from his rebellious son Absalom. I might mention the occasional prayers of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, and especially the occasional prayers of Christ. All these instances teach us the propriety and importance of praying to God, on all extraordinary occasions of prosperity and adversity. All men ought to observe the operations of God in his providence, and this will teach them when and how they ought to pray on extraordinary occasions. Let their feelings and prayers always correspond with the dispensations of providence, in granting or taking away both temporal and spiritual, public and private favours. And if they pray always, with all prayer and supplications, from day to day, they will always remember and never forget nor neglect to call upon God, under the uncommon smiles and frowns of providence.

I shall close the present com-

munication with a single inference.

If all men ought always to pray, then none ought ever to direct them *not* to pray. It is said, that some preachers, either expressly or implicitly, direct sinners not to pray. But I know of but one denomination of christians in the world, who maintain it as a principle and duty to direct sinners not to pray. These are the small sect called Sandemanians. They do, in their writings and preaching, teach sinners that they ought not to pray, or that they are not bound to pray, until they cordially embrace the gospel. All other denominations of christians, as far as I know, maintain the principle, that all men, whether saints or sinners, ought to pray. It is true indeed, that Calvinists are often charged with denying the duty of sinners to pray, and with exhorting them to refrain from it. But I am acquainted with no Calvinists, whether more strict or more moderate, that deny the duty of sinners to pray, and teach them to neglect the duty. The truth of the case is, that all Calvinists maintain the doctrine of divine decrees, the doctrine of total depravity, and the doctrine of regeneration by the special grace of God. But the Anti-Calvinists say, that if the doctrine of divine decrees be true, sinners have nothing to do; or if the doctrine of total depravity be true, it is naturally impossible for sinners to do any thing right; or if the doctrine of regeneration be true, it is naturally impossible for sinners to love or obey God. From these premises, they draw their own conclusion, that all Calvinists deny that sinners ought to pray, and implicitly tell them to neglect prayer. But strict Calvinists deny this conclusion.

They say that neither the doctrine of decrees, nor the doctrine of total depravity, nor the doctrine of regeneration, destroys the free agency of sinners, or lays them under a natural inability to do all that God requires of them in the law and in the gospel, and accordingly, they expressly exhort sinners to pray, and do every thing else that he requires them to do. It is true, the moderate Calvinists, in explaining the doctrine of decrees, the doctrine of total depravity, and the doctrine of regeneration, do say some things, which imply that these doctrines lay sinners under a *natural* inability to pray, or to do any thing else in cordial obedience to God; from which, sinners draw the consequence, that they have nothing to do. But however inconsistent these moderate Calvinists may be, they nevertheless universally exhort sinners to pray, repent, believe, and do every other duty. It is not true of any Calvinists, that they deny that sinners ought to pray, or that they exhort them to neglect this, or any other duty. It must be allowed that preachers are often faulty in not explaining to sinners in what sense, they *cannot*, and in what sense they *can* pray aright. They are, indeed, *morally unable* to pray penitently; but they are *naturally* able to pray penitently; they ought to be *exhorted* to pray penitently, and warned against praying impenitently. This is the scripture mode of exhorting sinners to pray; and this is the mode in which strict Calvinists do exhort and warn sinners in respect to the duty of prayer.

For the Christian Magazine.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES
TO THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

THE question, whether all true believers will be saved or not, is peculiarly interesting and important. It is well known that upon this subject, there are different opinions. While some cherish the belief that all, who have been once united to Christ by faith in his name, will persevere in holiness and obtain salvation; there are others who indulge the disheartening apprehension that many of this description will entirely lose their christian character, and finally receive their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. It is the design of the present communication to prove, from the testimony of scripture, that all true believers will eventually be saved. The passages which support this truth may be divided into two classes: Those which expressly assert it, and, Those which plainly imply it.

Among those which expressly assert the fact, that all true believers will be saved, are the following: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you," said Christ to the Jews, "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Here it is asserted, that whosoever believeth on Christ shall not perish, but, shall have everlasting life; that he who heareth the word of Christ, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Now is not this as much as to say,

that every true believer shall be saved? Indeed, in the above quotations, is not the fact that every true believer shall be saved, *repeatedly* asserted? Does not Christ assert this truth when he says, "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not *perish*?" Does he not assert it again when he says of such a person, "He shall have everlasting life?" Does he not assert it again when he says, "He *hath* everlasting life?" Does he not assert the same thing when he says, "He shall not *come into condemnation*?" Does he not assert the same thing again when he says, "He has passed from death unto life?" In what sense can a believer who apostatizes from his faith, and perishes forever, be said "to have everlasting life?" Or how is it true of such a one, "he shall not come into condemnation?"

Again, Jesus said to the Jews, "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." It is evident that by "his sheep," in this passage, Christ meant all true believers; for he said to the Jews, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep," plainly implying that all who did believe were his sheep. Concerning these, he says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." It is not seen why the language of Christ in this passage, respecting the salvation of believers, is not as unequivocal, and as strong, as it would be, had he said, in so

many words, All true believers shall eventually be saved.

Another passage, in which the truth under consideration is expressly asserted, is found in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." That every true believer is justified, comparatively few will deny. Indeed, there are none who *can* deny this, without contradicting the apostle, who, in another place, declares, that "all that believe are justified." Now if all who believe are justified, and if all who are justified, will be glorified, according to the passage quoted above, the salvation of all true believers is established upon an immutable foundation.

Many other passages, which assert the fact, that all true believers will be saved, as clearly as those already quoted, might be adduced. But these are sufficient. I shall now, in the *second* place, present before my readers a few passages which do not so expressly assert this truth, but which plainly, and necessarily *imply* it. These are not exhibited, however, with a view of rendering more certain what is expressly asserted by the sacred writers. If the passages above quoted, do assert the fact that all true believers will be saved, the testimony of others is not necessary to render it more certain. But still, there is a propriety in considering other passages; because, if the same truth appears to be supported by them, it will be additional evidence, that we have understood those already considered, according to their true import.

The first passage under this head, to which I would direct the

attention of my readers, is that which immediately follows the one last quoted from Paul's Epistle to the Romans. What favours the doctrine of the saints' perseverance and salvation in this passage, is the triumphant joy, which the apostle expresses at the thought, that God is their security against every spiritual foe, and his strong confidence that nothing shall ever separate them from the love of Christ. With the consoling truth, that "all who are justified shall be glorified," full in his mind, he begins with the following language of triumph; "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us *all* things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—Nay, in all these things, we are *more than conquerors*, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now upon the supposition that Paul believed that all true believers will be saved, this language appears perfectly natural and proper. Conscious himself

of having received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and perceiving satisfactory evidence that the members of the Roman church were also true believers, he could, upon the supposition that there was a promise of God that all of this description should be saved, indulge himself in the joy and triumph which are expressed in this passage. But only suppose that he was not only destitute of evidence that all believers would be saved, but assured that many of them would actually apostatize and perish; and how unnatural and improper his language appears? Upon this supposition, he has reason to fear that both he and others may be led, by the artifice of some spiritual foe, or by the influence of some temptation, eventually to forsake Christ, and, as a just punishment of their sins, be finally excluded from his presence. How then could he, with so much confidence, and joy, exclaim, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" If he knew not but that he and the others associated with him in this language of triumph, should one day fall before his spiritual foes, how could he say, with the same breath by which he particularly enumerates them, "Nay, in all these things, we are *more than conquerors*?" If it is a fact, that saints, however eminent for their piety, have no effectual security against apostacy; how could the apostle, who must have been well acquainted with this fact, honestly make the following profession of security. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any

other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" This is certainly the language of assurance upon this subject. And nothing but an assurance could justify the apostle, or any one else, in the use of it.

The confidence, which Paul expressed respecting the saints at Philippi, implies the truth which we are attempting to maintain. "Being confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This expression of Paul's confidence, that the work of divine grace, begun in the hearts of the Philippians, would be completed, amounts, if he was divinely inspired, to little less than an *assertion* of the same thing.

The prayers which Christ offered for his disciples, furnish an argument in favour of the perseverance and salvation of all true believers. After having prayed for the Apostles in particular, he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." Here is a prayer for all christians, "that they may become partakers of that divine union, which in heaven, is the most perfect resemblance of the ineffable union of the Father and Son. If then any christian fails of sharing in this union, the prayer of Christ will not be answered." But on a certain occasion, Christ said in a prayer to his Father, "I know that thou always hearest me."

That class of texts which speak of saints as having been "from the beginning chosen unto salvation," proves that they will all

eventually be saved. Paul, addressing himself to the christians at Ephesus, says, "According as he hath chosen us in him, (that is Christ,) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Similar to this is his language to the Thessalonians. "God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Now we know that the term *chosen*, or *elect*, is applied in the New Testament, to saints universally. It was to christians, that Christ had reference, when he said, "And shall not God avenge his own *elect*?" Paul was speaking of christians in general, when he asked, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's *elect*?" Peter was writing to christians, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythia, when he addressed them by the title, "*Elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God." To the same persons he says, in another place, "Ye are a *chosen generation*." In the Revelation of John, the angel declares to him, concerning the followers of the Lamb, that they are "*called, and chosen, and faithful*." Now if all true believers are among the elect, who, as the Apostle declares, "were from the beginning, chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth," will they not all be saved? To suppose the contrary, would be to suppose that the purpose of God might be frustrated. The certain connexion between the election and final salvation of believers, is most beautifully, as well

as strongly expressed, in a passage, which has been before quoted. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

The following exhortation of Peter to those to whom he addressed his Epistle, plainly implies the salvation of all true believers. "Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." This passage implies, that there is some means by which saints may become *sure* of the fact that they have been called and elected. It seems to have been the design of the apostle, to exhort them constantly to strive for the attainment of that holiness, which is an indubitable evidence that they are of that number, who were from eternity elected unto salvation, and who have in time been called by an effectual calling. But their calling and election could never be made sure in this sense, if true believers may fall away and perish. Supposing they acquire as much holiness as the most eminent saints ever possess; that their love, and faith, and every grace, are so constant and lively as to give them an assurance that they have been born of God,—they cannot know by this, that they are elected unto salvation; because upon the supposition that true believers may fall away, they cannot but still fear, that their high attainments in holiness are to be succeeded by the lowest depths of sin, and their cheering hope of heavenly happiness, by the actual suffering of infernal pains.

An argument in favour of the saint's perseverance and salvation, may be drawn from an expression, which Christ dropped in his

conversation with the woman of Samaria. In this, he represents the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which he would give to men, under the similitude of the waters of a never failing spring. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Whatever else may be taught by this passage, it certainly assures us of the following truth: From those who have once received the Holy Spirit, in its renewing, and sanctifying influence, it shall never be permanently withdrawn—its parts shall continue through life, (at least at intervals,) be from time to time, a source of satisfaction, with which no worldly enjoyment can bear a comparison; and increase, until they constitute that state of perfect, spiritual life, which shall be forever enjoyed in heaven. Every true christian drinks of the water which Christ has to give. But if he may totally apostatize, what shall prevent his thirsting again? The water, which Christ gives, shall be in the christian, "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." But if he so apostatizes as eventually to perish, in what sense does the water of Christ, which he has received, "spring up into everlasting life?"

What the apostle John says of the christian hope, confirms the truth, that all true believers will eventually be saved. "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as *he*," (that is Christ,) "is pure." The idea most naturally conveyed by these words is, that the hope, of which the christian is the subject, and which has originated from the operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, is of a pu-

rifying nature, and that the ultimate effects of it will be a complete conformity to the moral image of Christ. But upon the supposition, that true believers ever entirely fall away and perish, this is not true. Their hope does not have this effect.

I shall mention but one passage more in proof of the doctrine now under consideration, and that is the declaration of the apostle John. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Now upon the supposition, that those who are born of God, do entirely fall away and perish; in what sense is it true that they cannot sin? Upon this supposition, they do sin, knowingly, and wilfully, and constantly. Add to this, their sin is "unto death." By the supposition that they apostatize, and actually perish in their sins, it is admitted, that they not only sin in all respects, as other men do, except with aggravated guilt; but that they suffer that eternal death, which is the proper wages of sin. Upon the supposition then, that true believers may fall away and perish, the declaration of the apostle, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin," appears to be untrue. But upon the contrary supposition, that all true believers persevere in holiness, and obtain salvation, there is a sense in which, "whosoever is born of God, doth *not* commit sin." He does not live a *life* of sin, nor does he commit the unpardonable sin. Although he is frequently guilty of many, and great offences; yet he daily repents, humbles himself before God, and obtains forgiveness. While others are slaves to sin, he is, in a degree, free from its

dominion. While they are pursuing, without interruption, a course of sin, which must inevitably lead to death, and in which they are liable to commit the unpardonable sin; he is habitually walking in the path of life, secured by the promise of God from the commission of that sin which is unto death.

This subject teaches us what opinion we ought to form of those, who appear for a time to be truly pious, but afterwards entirely fall away. We are obliged to conclude they are not what they appeared to be. There were some, in the days of the apostles, who appeared to be the disciples of Christ, and for a time, associated themselves with the apostles, but afterwards renounced christianity, and became its open opposers. Of such, John says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out from us that it might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." It appears both from the words of Christ, and the writings of the apostles, that persons may be subjects of great light, may be in a sense partakers of the Holy Ghost, may be influenced to make high professions in religion, and to perform, externally, many duties which the gospel requires, and still not be true christians. The following words are from the lips of Christ: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out Devils? And in thy name done many wonderful

works? And then will I profess unto you, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Now that the persons here described were never true christians, is evident from the declaration of Christ, "I never *knew* you." As every true christian "knows God," and "is known of God;" as "the Lord *knoweth* them that are his;" if the persons above described, had ever been true believers, Christ can never say in truth, that he never knew them. But it appears that these persons had borne, in many respects, a very near resemblance to true christians; they had often prayed, saying, Lord, Lord;—they had prophesied in the name of the Lord;—they had cast out Devils in his name;—and in his name done many wonderful works. These works they could not have done, had they not been, in some sense, the partakers of the Holy Ghost. They doubtless had had more light, and made greater attainments in the knowledge of divine things, than some true believers. But they were all the while destitute of that "holiness, without which, no man can see the Lord." It is persons of this description, I apprehend, that are spoken of by the apostles, as having "sinned wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, to whom there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain, fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries:" as having "trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace, who are justly thought worthy of a much sorer punishment than those

who despised Moses' law, and died without mercy, under two or three witnesses:"—as having "turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them, after they had known the way of righteousness, whose latter end is worse than the beginning." Persons of this description, although they have never received Christ into their hearts, have had such measures of light communicated to their minds by the Holy Ghost, as to know, in a very important sense, his divine power and excellence. So daring is their impiety, and so aggravated their guilt, when they openly renounce christianity, or blaspheme the Holy Ghost, that God has determined, and revealed his purpose, that they shall never be forgiven. Let those who have been well instructed upon the subject of religion, and often felt the awakening and convincing power of the Holy Spirit, beware of their danger.

The subject which has been discussed in this paper, is well suited to administer consolation to all true believers. It gives them just as much evidence that they shall be saved, as they have that they are believers. Those who have good evidence that they do truly believe in the Son of God, may comfort themselves with the expectation, that they shall at last obtain eternal life. If there are any who enjoy an assurance of their *faith*, they may enjoy, and they ought to enjoy, an assurance of their salvation; for Christ himself has said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Those who entertain a hope that they are united to Christ, cannot indeed be too solicitous to know the nature of their *faith*. There is danger of their being deceived,

in regard to *this*, and consequently in regard to their hope of salvation. But if they do receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith—by that "faith which works by love, and purifies the heart," and have evidence of this, they need not be anxious respecting their future condition. To them who are thus in Christ, there is no condemnation. A.

For the Christian Magazine.

QUESTION.

What is intended by sins of ignorance?

By sins of ignorance, is intended the doing of such things ignorantly, as *in themselves* are wrong. There is a right, and a wrong, in actions *themselves*, separate from the particular intention with which they are performed. Thus, *trespass* is an action wrong in itself; but a person may commit trespass ignorantly, and without any bad intention. B. is employed by A. to fell trees in his forest; but in doing this, he unconsciously cuts some very valuable trees in the forest of C. B. is now chargeable with trespass—with doing an action that is wrong in itself; although he did it in perfect ignorance, and without any bad intention. The *taking* of another's property without his consent, and appropriating it to our own use, is a thing wrong in itself; but this may be done ignorantly, and without any bad design. B., who is about embarking for a distant country, puts up for the night at a public house. He lodges in the room with several others, and they all lay their watches on the same table. In the night, B. is summoned to take his departure; and in his hurry, and in a

state of darkness, he unconsciously takes another man's watch, which is worth ten times as much as his own. His mistake is not perceived, till he has actually embarked, and restitution is impossible. B. has now taken the property of another without his consent, and appropriated it to his own use; but he has done it ignorantly, and without any bad design.—These instances, from among the thousands which may occur, and which actually have occurred, may be sufficient to show what, I suppose, is intended by sins of ignorance.

If it be inquired whether these are actually *sins*, and whether the doers of them are *guilty* in the sight of God; I answer in the negative; at least they are not necessarily so. Sin, in the most proper sense of the word—that which incurs guilt in the sight of God, is always committed with a bad intention. But the actions of which we are speaking, are by the supposition, performed ignorantly, and without any bad intention. It is even possible that they may be performed with a perfectly *good* intention. B. may be doing his duty, in the fear of God, and the enjoyment of religion, while he is unconsciously trespassing upon the property of C. For such actions, persons may always render a sufficient excuse. Every one's conscience decides for him, that it ought to satisfy both God and men, if he is able to plead truly, in excuse for a wrong action, *I did it ignorantly*.—I know of no exception to these remarks, unless it be when a person's ignorance is the result of criminal *negligence*, in acquiring light and information; and even then, the criminality applies to the previous *negligence*, and not to the wrong act, which is per-

formed in total ignorance and darkness.

But it will be said, if the actions of which we are speaking, are not properly sins, why are they called sins in the scriptures? And why was it provided in the law of Moses, that an *atonement* should be made for those who had “sinned through ignorance,” in order that they might be *forgiven*? These actions are called *sins*, in the scriptures, because they are wrong *in themselves*; and not because they are *criminally* wrong, and *literally* incur guilt. And the atonement which was made for them, may be understood as an *acknowledgment* on the part of those who performed them, that the actions *were* wrong in themselves—such as they did not allow, and such as they never should have performed, had they been favoured with sufficient light. An instituted rite, amounting to such an acknowledgment, was in the highest degree proper, both in a religious and political point of view, in order that the penalty due to the wrong actions might be remitted. Had the persons, performing them, been set at liberty, without such an atonement, or public acknowledgment, the whole church and nation might have been charged with conniving at the evil.

But it will be said again, that on the ground here taken, we shall excuse the Jews in murdering Christ, since it is admitted by Peter, that they “did it *through ignorance* ;” and shall excuse Paul also in persecuting the church, for he alleges it as a reason why he obtained mercy, that he “did it *ignorantly*.” But it will be sufficient to reply to this objection, that although these Jews, and Paul, were in a state of mind which justifies the expressions

which have been quoted, yet they were not in that state of *total ignorance and darkness*, which is supposed in these remarks. Their ignorance was but partial; and, so far as it extended, it was wholly wilful. It was the criminal result of prejudice and wilful blindness.

On the whole, I think it right to say, that sins of ignorance are actions *wrong in themselves*, which have been committed without a bad intention; and when the ignorance is total, and not wilful, they cannot be morally or criminally wrong. P.

For the Christian Magazine.

REPLY TO XANTHUS.

Messrs. Editors,—In the number of your work for November last, was published a communication of Xanthus, on positive divine efficiency, in Reply to Orange, in your April number. Although I do not approve of the opinion advanced by Xanthus; yet as his communication was written with ability and candour, I think you did right in inserting it. In my apprehension, a little discussion upon this subject, would give an interest to your work, and be useful to your readers. I have waited with impatience to see a reply from Orange; but none has appeared. How to account for this, I know not; but unwilling, that the subject should stand any longer in its present attitude, upon your pages, I send you the following reply.

It was the object of Orange, in his communication, to state and answer some of the most plausible objections to the doctrine of a positive, divine agency, in the evil volitions, and conduct of the

wicked. The objections which he stated and answered, were the three following. 1. "It makes God a sinner." 2. "It infringes the liberty of the agent." 3. "It destroys the use of means." Xanthus admits that Orange has fully answered these objections; but says these are not the objections which are the most commonly made to the doctrine in question; and complains that he should labour to answer those which are seldom, or never made, while he neglects to notice others, which are in the mouths of multitudes, and which he thinks are much more difficult to answer. I am of the opinion, however, that the objections which O. stated and answered, are the objections which are the most frequently urged against the doctrine in question, and am not a little surprised, to hear X. assert, that he "never heard any of them made, except the first, by any who believe in a positive agency, in the case of saints." It is, indeed, true, that no one who believes in a positive divine agency in the case of saints, can consistently make, either of the two last, or the first. But my memory deceives me egregiously, if I have not often heard persons of this description make all these objections. But, be this as it may, it can be shown, I think, that the objections, which X. himself states, may be as satisfactorily answered, as those have been, which were met by O. But before considering these particularly, I have one word to say in regard to X's representation of the agency in question. He says that the agency, which O. attempts to defend, "*is the same in kind and degree that is exerted in the hearts of christians.*" But this is an inference of his own; O. does not assert this. He does, in-

deed, call the agency which he defends, a positive agency. But I cannot find that he informs his readers, whether he means this, or that kind of positive agency; or whether there is more than one kind of positive, divine agency or not. Nor does he say a word in regard to *degrees* in divine agency. Of the manner in which God operates upon the minds, either of saints or sinners, O. did not, it is presumed, mean to say a word. He appears to mean only, that God does as *really*, and directly, operate upon the minds of sinners, to produce their sinful volitions, as upon the minds of saints, to produce their holy volitions; without meddling with the question, whether the agency be the same in kind, and degree, or not. I mention these facts, because X. gives the objections which he makes to O.'s view of divine agency, a plausibility which they could not have, if it were not for this unauthorized representation of it. It does not become me to say definitely, what O.'s views on this subject are, any farther than he has expressed them; but this, I need not hesitate to say; I know of no man, who believes in a direct and positive divine agency, in the volition of sinners, who would say, that this is the same in kind and degree, with that which is exerted in the volitions of saints. They do not, indeed, hesitate to say, that the latter, is like the former, in this respect, viz. it is direct and positive. But of the manner, in which God operates in any case, and of the degree of agency employed, and of the different kinds of divine agency, except as they are designated by the effects produced; they are, so far as I know, entirely silent. The different effects produced, lead them to

speak of the agency of God, as common, and special. His agency in producing holy exercises, is called *special*; because these are *special effects*; not that it is any more direct, and positive, than that which is concerned in the volitions of wicked men, or in the government of the world in general. The agency of God, in the production of holy exercises, is distinguished from his common agency, in this respect also, it is the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit, in his official capacity. I would not charge X. with any intentional misrepresentation; but justice to the subject which he discusses, as well as to the cause of his opponent, requires me to say, that if he had spoken of positive divine agency, precisely in the light in which it is viewed by its advocates, his objections would have lost at once, more than half their weight. Let X. review his objections, and consider that his opponent admits, as well as he, that the Holy Spirit, in his official capacity, is the efficient cause of none but holy exercises; and that his operations are considered as *special* operations, both on account of their being the appropriate operations of the Holy Spirit, in distinction from the other Divine Persons, and the speciality of the *effects* which they produce; and I cannot but think that the greater part which he has written, in support of his first, and second objections, will appear to him, as they do to me, totally irrelevant to the subject. But I shall not pass over these objections in this general way, but consider them particularly.

1. "The doctrine in question, is contrary to the experience of christians." To this I reply, the agency of God, is nothing of

which experience ever takes any cognizance. Neither saints, nor sinners, are ever conscious of the divine agency upon their minds. They are conscious of their own agency, which is an effect of the divine; but they are no more conscious of the divine agency in their volitions, than they are in the preservation of their lives. And if they are not conscious of the divine agency, it is a clear case, they cannot tell what is true, or false, respecting it, by their experience.

But it is said that christians feel, and frequently say, "that if left to themselves, that is, without any different kind, or degree of divine agency, than they had before conversion, they should have gone on in sin." This is true; they do feel, and say so, and what they say, cannot be contradicted. But what does it prove? Nothing more than what every orthodox man believes: that without the special influence of the Holy Spirit, no person will ever repent and believe, leaving untouched the question, whether the common agency of God upon the minds of sinners, and in the government of the world, is positive or privative, direct or indirect. Christians, I know, are conscious of different affections from those, which they once exercised. But all they know, respecting the kind of divine agency which produced them, is learned from the scriptures, and not from their experience.

2. "This doctrine is inconsistent with the representations of scripture." This objection, I beg leave to answer, by directly contradicting what it affirms. The representations of scripture on this subject, are such as naturally, if not necessarily, to make an impression upon the mind of an at-

tentive, and impartial reader, that God has a direct, and positive agency, in the evil, as well as good actions of men. It is believed, that no person can examine the numerous passages which relate to this subject, without finding it extremely difficult to avoid an impression of this kind. He will be conscious of an impossibility, to escape it, without an effort to set aside their most plain, and obvious import. As a specimen of these passages, let the reader consider the following: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I *form* the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord, do all these things." "Who *worketh* all things after the counsel of his own will." "For *of him*, and through him, and to him, are all things." "We are not sufficient of ourselves to *think any thing* as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground, without your Father;" (Do not wicked men sometimes kill sparrows?) It is by the exertion of the wicked, that ungodly men are promoted and established in authority. But in this very thing, God claims an agency. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and *giveth* it to whomsoever he will, and *sitteth* up over it the basest of men." There is no truth which every man will more readily admit, than that the kings of the earth are now, and always have been, as a body, prone to do evil. But it is written, "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord—he *turneth* it withersoever he will." No person, acquainted with the subject, can entertain a doubt of the criminality of those who gave their kingdom to the beast, men-

tioned in the revelation of St. John. But the agency of God, is said to be concerned in this. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast." To err from God's ways, and to harden the heart from his fear, is to sin. But it is evidently implied, in what Isaiah says unto God respecting Israel, that his agency was concerned in their errors, and hardness of heart. "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear." It is a fact well known, that David sinned in numbering Israel, and that a peculiarly severe, and dreadful judgment fell upon his kingdom, for what he did. But in this sin of David, the positive agency of God appears to have been concerned. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he *moved* David against them to say, Go number Israel, and Judah." Joseph's brethren have always been considered as criminal, for selling him into Egypt; and when they afterwards stood before him, they acknowledged their guilt. But Joseph acknowledged the agency of God in this very thing. "Now, therefore, be not grieved, for God did send me before you to preserve life; and God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth. So now, it was not you that sold me hither, but God. As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." In that hardness of heart which led Pharaoh to defy the God of Israel, and to hold his chosen people in bondage, in opposition to his commands, the agency of God was concerned. "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he harkened not unto them, as the Lord

had spoken unto Moses. And the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was *turned* against his people." It is remarkable that the Psalmist ascribes this turning of their heart, to the agency of God. In reference to this very fact, the Psalmist says, "The Lord *turned* their heart to hate his people." Of the Jews, who rejected Christ, it is said by the apostle, referring to a prophecy in the Old Testament respecting them, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." Respecting the false prophets, God says, "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him." Of some who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, Paul says, "And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Now whether the doctrine of a positive, divine agency in the sinful actions of men, be inconsistent with the representations of scripture, I leave to my readers to say. One thing I am sure they will all admit, and that is this; If any preacher of the gospel, speaking of the agency of God upon the minds of the wicked, should now use this language, or any other equally strong, and decisive; he would generally, if not universally, be understood to mean, a direct, and positive agency. Why then should not the scriptures be so understood? The fact that this, and similar language, when used by man, is understood to mean, a di-

rect, and positive divine agency, is proof conclusive, that this is the obvious meaning of the scriptures. Is it not then a little strange, that X. should so confidently affirm, that the doctrine in question, is inconsistent with the representation of the scriptures? It corresponds exactly, not only with the representation given of the subject in the above quotations, but with a list of texts, the length of which forbids their recital. One of the strongest objections, which I feel to the theory advanced by X. in opposition to this doctrine, is, it is inconsistent with the representations of scripture. It sets aside the obvious sense of texts, destroys more than half of their force, and renders them unfit for use on ordinary occasions, without a laborious comment. X. has, indeed, laboured hard to support the above objection to the doctrine in question. But after a long, and patient attention to the facts which he names, I can see nothing which appears to me any more inconsistent with this doctrine, than with his own. He professes to believe in an "efficient, divine agency, which accomplishes all which God designs;" an agency which is concerned in every event in the universe.

It is admitted "that mankind are prone to evil, exclusively and continually." But the question is, why are they so? The fact itself is more satisfactorily accounted for, by admitting, than by denying the doctrine in question. It is admitted that they are often "led captive by Satan at his will." But the question is, why do they *comply* with his temptations? The fact that they do, is as consistent with a direct and positive divine agency, as with a "privative, indirect, and

general divine agency," and much more easily accounted for, by the former, than by the latter.

It is admitted "that mankind are not tempted of God when they commit iniquity." But the question is, may not his agency be directly concerned in their voluntarily yielding to, or resisting the temptations which their "own lusts" present? A direct and positive agency in this case, certainly looks no more like a temptation from God, than that "general agency," by which, as X. himself believes, God presents motives before the minds of sinners, which he knows, and designs, shall certainly lead them astray.

It is true, that the good deeds of saints, are ascribed to God in a different sense from that in which evil deeds are ascribed to him. But this is sufficiently accounted for, on the ground that they are *special*, and not common effects of his agency.

X. asserts that the *credit* of good actions is ascribed to God in a peculiar sense, and asks why, upon the principle maintained by O. "are not the actions of the wicked to be ascribed to him in the same sense?" The answer to this is easy; there is no *credit* due to wicked actions, unless it is the good effects which they are overruled to produce, and these *are* always ascribed to God.

X. says, that "the scriptures represent the human mind as a scene of controversy between God, and the adversary of souls," and thinks this representation inconsistent with the doctrine of a direct and positive divine agency upon the minds of the wicked. But I ask in reply, is this representation, allowing it to be just, really any more inconsistent with a direct and positive divine agen-

cy, than with an indirect, but "efficient" divine agency? If X. will only reconcile his own scheme with the representation which he has here given, he will effectually remove the ground of its apparent inconsistency with O.'s.

3. "The doctrine is not in the bible." This, it is believed, is an assertion which very few attentive readers of the bible would venture to make. For myself, I should feel little less hesitation in affirming, that the doctrine of a direct, and positive, divine influence, in the holy actions of saints, is not in the bible. There are as *many* passages of scripture, which speak of the agency of God in the actions of sinners, as there are, which speak of his agency in the actions of saints. The language of the former is as strong, and as expressive of a direct, and positive, divine agency, as that of the latter. And the principles of interpretation, by which the former are made to indicate a "privative, indirect, and general agency" only, must unavoidably render the latter expressive of nothing more. The Arminians have long used these principles of interpretation, to disprove a direct and positive agency in the conversion of sinners.

I agree with X. that it is proper "to ascribe to God in one sense, what is done by man in another sense." But I cannot agree with him in his application of this principle. He certainly makes a very remarkable use of it. After mentioning the difficulty which arises from the fact, that Pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart; at the same time, it is said, God hardened his heart; he says, "I know of no way to avoid this difficulty, but by adopting the principle in question, and saying God heardened Pharaoh's

heart by employing another, (that is Pharaoh himself) to do it." Now in regard to this, I have only to say, the solution of the difficulty is so unnatural and forced, that I can feel no satisfaction at all in it. "God hardened Pharaoh's heart by employing another, (that is Pharaoh himself) to do it!!" This is surely an expedient to get rid of the direct agency of God, worthy of the cause of those who would do it away! But allowing, that God did harden Pharaoh's heart, "by employing another (that is Pharaoh himself) to do it." Is it not quite as natural and quite as easy to suppose, that he influenced him to do it, by a direct and positive agency, as by an "indirect and privative agency?" As we know God did not command Pharaoh to harden his own heart, nor exhort him to do it, nor tempt him to do it, it really seems difficult to affix any definite meaning to the assertion of X. that he *employed* him to do it, unless we suppose that he exerted a positive agency in the case.

Because X. finds that "what is done by man in one sense, is frequently ascribed to God in another sense," he thinks that when God is said to exert an agency in the sinful volitions of men, the meaning is not, that he has any direct influence upon them, but that he merely makes use of secondary causes to lead them to fulfil his purposes. He supposes, that God moved David to number Israel, "by employing Satan to move him." That Satan was used as an instrument or means in this case, is undoubtedly a fact. But to deny the direct and positive agency of God in it, merely because the devil is mentioned as the instrument employed, is precisely the same thing in principle,

as to deny the direct and positive agency of God in the conversion of the Corinthians, because this work was accomplished by the instrumentality of Paul. It is said as expressly that Paul converted the Corinthians, as it is that Satan moved David to number Israel. In his second Epistle to them, we find this declaration, "I have begotten you through the gospel." Now if we are to conclude from the circumstance that this act is attributed to Satan as well as God, that all God did in moving David to number Israel, was to employ Satan to move him;—then we must of course conclude from the fact that the conversion of the Corinthians is attributed to Paul as well as to God, that all God did in this work was to employ Paul and others to present before them the motives of the gospel. But this is a conclusion which X. will not admit. He ought then to give up the premises from which it is legitimately drawn.

Mankind are *dependent* creatures. It is impossible that they should be made in any respect independent. The agency of God must, therefore, always be essential to their agency. "God works in them to will and to do." It is impossible, I apprehend, for any person to understand what the scriptures say respecting the agency of God and his creatures, without admitting the principle that they act in consequence of being acted upon. This principle must be admitted, not only in regard to saints, but to sinners. It serves to explain better than any other the difficult cases presented by X. God inclined Pharaoh in view of the motives presented before him to harden his heart; and this is the reason why *God* is said to have hardened his heart. Pharaoh hardened

his own heart in consequence of being thus inclined to do it; and this is the reason why he is said to have hardened his own heart. In the same way, I should answer X.'s question respecting God's moving David to number Israel. Satan was employed to present motives to this sin before David. This is the reason why it is said in one place, that "Satan moved him to number Israel." When the motives were presented before him, the Lord inclined him to comply with the temptation. This is the reason why it is said in another place, the "*Lord* moved David to number Israel." Under the influence of this divine agency and in view of the motive before him, David voluntarily numbered Israel. This is the reason why the transaction is spoken of in another place as David's own act.

INVESTIGATOR.

CONTENTMENT.

HE that hath a competency, hath all the contentment that is to be found in temporary things. Experience will tell him, though riches may increase, yet after a sufficiency is attained, contentment will increase no more, though riches may increase ever so much.

Mede.

THE most hardened sinner has some conscience left. He knows that all is not quite right, and hence he has occasional fears that all is not quite safe.

Erskine.

GOD denies a Christian nothing, but with a design to give him something better.

Cecil.

For the Christian Magazine.

IMPROPER INSTRUCTION TO AN AWAKENED SINNER.

Messrs. Editors,—If you think the following thoughts upon an important subject are worthy of the perusal of your readers, you are at liberty to give them a place in the Christian Magazine.

I have frequently observed the loose, indefinite, and false instruction which is often given to sinners under conviction. For one, I believe that even ministers of the gospel are too apt to give awakened sinners encouragement upon improper grounds, and that laymen are still more prone to this error. There are many, both of ministers and private christians, who, instead of directing them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ immediately, and of spending their whole strength in endeavours to influence them to comply with these conditions of salvation, often converse with them in a manner which leaves a decided impression on their minds, that they are at liberty to wait God's time before they repent, and that they must do something to *get* a new heart, rather than *make* one. They often exhort them to read, and pray, and use other means of becoming converted, when the case imperiously requires that they should be shown their obligation to repent immediately, and the guilt and danger of a moment's delay. I have not only been struck with the difference between this manner of treating awakened sinners, and the manner in which Paul and Peter taught those who inquired of them what they should do to be saved; but alarmed at the consequences of such injudicious treatment. This I verily believe has often been the means of diminish-

ing the sinner's sense of his obligation to repent, and of soothing his fears in regard to the consequences of impenitence. There is reason to believe that it has frequently been the means of keeping sinners from Christ much longer than they would have remained, if they had received scriptural instruction in season. It is not at all incredible that, in many instances, it has been the means of so abating their sense of guilt, and fear of punishment, that they have thrown off their convictions entirely, and returned to their former stupidity. I am led to the indulgence of these apprehensions, not only from the effects which I have frequently *seen* as the result of this mode of treatment, but from what I once myself experienced.

When my attention was first called to the subject of religion, I was very young, and very ignorant, both of my obligation to God, and the depravity of my own heart. For some time my impressions were those of *alarm* merely, arising from a belief that I was destitute of religion, which I had been taught to consider as essential to my future happiness. I soon, however, became convinced of the sinfulness of my heart and life, and felt my obligation to repent and believe the gospel. As this conviction increased upon my mind, I became more and more sensible of my natural unwillingness to turn to God, or to accept the Saviour. I saw that I hated God, and Christ, and the whole plan of salvation. I saw that I did not desire religion from any proper motives, and that all my prayers were but the selfish cries of a distressed but impenitent sinner. My dependence upon myself began to fail—I began to despair of ever doing

any thing to better my condition—I saw myself guilty and helpless in the hands of a sovereign God. In this state of mind I went to a conference meeting, where were a number who had recently obtained a hope of their forgiveness and salvation. They were very joyful and happy, and conversed with each other, and addressed the meeting in a very interesting and solemn manner. At the close of the meeting, on my return home, I fell in company with one of these new converts, who immediately and very affectionately inquired into the state of my mind, which he knew had been for a long time anxious and distressed. I answered, there is no hope for me. He replied, “God offers mercy freely to all.” I know that, said I, but I have no heart to receive it, and his offers of mercy will do me no good, if I continue to reject them. “But you must pray for a new heart,” was his answer. To this I replied, I cannot pray aright. My heart is opposed to God. All my prayers flow from a selfish, impenitent heart, which God abhors. *I don’t see as I can do any thing.* “Oh don’t be discouraged, he replied; I believe if you pray as well as you can, even if you do not pray with a good heart, God will hear you. Now I advise you to go away alone, and kneel down and pray as well as you can. Keep doing this, and don’t give out, and I doubt not you will soon obtain religion.” All this, coming from a man, who, as I supposed, had himself just experienced a change of heart, and who, as I knew, was esteemed a man of understanding as well as piety, led me to apprehend that I had given away to needless fears. The confidence which he expressed that I should be heard, if I pray-

ed as well as I could, whether I prayed aright or not, gave me great encouragement. I resolved to make the experiment. Although I remembered to have seen that I was totally sinful, that I had no affections or desires which were not selfish, and that all I had done to make myself better, had only made me worse; yet thought I, I can pray as well as I can, and if that will do, there is hope. This suggestion was peculiarly comforting. I went home greatly relieved: not with the hope that I had been renewed in the spirit of my mind, and that my sins were forgiven, but with a cheering confidence that I had now found out how these blessings might be obtained. I soon found an opportunity to retire, and attempt to pray. In this exercise I still felt conscious that my heart was not right with God. I felt an unusual languor and stupidity—it seemed as though my petitions did not arise above my head. But the thought that if I prayed as well as I could with my present feelings, kept up my courage and determined me to persevere. For several weeks, I followed the direction of my spiritual guide, and comforted myself with the expectation that in this way I should soon experience religion. But at length I found that this confidence in what I should effect by praying as well as I could with an impenitent heart, was gradually abating my anxiety, and rapidly carrying me back to my former state of stupidity. I now saw that I had been all this while, depending upon my own doings, and that I had been led to continue to depend upon them in consequence of what this christian friend had taught, when, as it then appeared to me, I was just

upon the point of giving up all hope from this source. I was now obliged, therefore, to renounce his instruction as false, and to admit the truth of what my experience had taught me before. For several days I felt myself "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." I saw that I was under obligation to repent, and love God, and at the same time, I saw that the depravity of my heart was such, that I never should submit to him, unless *he* made me willing. This was a time of indescribable distress. I saw myself in the hands of God, and felt an unwillingness to be there. I had no peace. My feelings were now essentially the same as those of which I was the subject before my conversation with the abovementioned friend. It was not long, however, after I lost all hope of doing any thing effectual myself, before I was, as I have reason to believe, set at liberty. And in reflecting upon this interesting scene, I have often thought that this well-meant, although injudicious instruction of my friend, was the means of keeping me longer from Christ, than I should probably have remained, had I never received it. It has appeared to me that I was near the point at which the grace of God finds the sinner and grants him relief, before I was carried back by the influence of this mistaken counsel. And my object in making this communication to the public, is to caution others against giving or receiving "the instruction which causeth to err." If the sinner must be brought to despair of all help in himself, before he can be made to throw himself upon Christ, it is certainly rational, as well as scriptural, to give him that instruction which is the best suited to destroy all confi-

dence in his own unregenerate doings. He should be taught that he is under obligation to be immediately holy, and that this is imperious and indispensable. Let him become thoroughly impressed with this, and he cannot long remain ignorant of his sinful, helpless, and wretched condition. There is nothing like a deep sense of one's own obligation to repent of sin, and to receive the Saviour; to convince him, that unless God give him repentance and draw him to Christ, he is forever undone. Let all, then, who have occasion to preach to sinners, or to converse with them under serious impressions, follow the example of Christ and his apostles, and urge the duty of immediate repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the earnestness of which they are capable. If there is any means well suited to draw them soon to Christ, it is this. If there is any mode of treatment which is likely to prevent their returning to their former state of stupidity, it is this. If there is any mode of treatment which God will condescend to bless as the means of their sanctification, it is this. PENITENS.

PAROCHIAL VISITS.

I HEARD complaints on the subject of a minister not visiting his people. This is a charge which is sometimes well founded, and sometimes not so. The minister of a large congregation would need to have twenty bodies, animated by twenty souls, and to be in twenty places at the same time, and to be cheerful, lively, spiritual, and entertaining in them all, and yet not satisfy the claims of the inconsiderate. When is a minister to prepare for study? How

is he to bring forth things new as well as old, if he does not increase his store? I can recollect that I endeavoured to gratify in this way, but I could not. It was not in my power to be out always, to go every where, or to prolong my visits to a degree that my friends wished. If pastors can satisfy their own consciences, they must disregard unreasonable complaints. *Mem. of Kingsbury.*

From Middleton's *Biographia Evangelica*.

JOHN ROGERS, THE PROTO-MARTYR
UNDER QUEEN MARY.

THIS brave champion for the truth, who had the honour of being PROTO-MARTYR, or the first that was burned for the gospel, in the reign of Queen Mary, was educated at the university of Cambridge, where he attained to a great proficiency in learning. From thence he was chosen by a company of merchants, to be their chaplain at Antwerp; to whom he preached many years. He there happily became acquainted with William Tindale and Miles Coverdale, who fled thither from the persecution of the Papists under King Henry VIII. in England; and, by their means, coming to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, he joined heartily with them in the laborious, and commendable work of translating the bible into English, and was thereby so much enlightened in the doctrines of the gospel, that he cast off the futile and idolatrous worship of the church of Rome. At Antwerp he married his wife, and from thence went to Wittenburg, daily increasing in knowledge, and became such a proficient in the Dutch language, that he was chosen pastor of a congregation

there; which office he discharged with great diligence and faithfulness for some years. In king Edward's time he was sent for home by bishop Ridley, and made prebendary and divinity-lecturer of St. Paul's, where he preached faithfully and zealously till the coming in of Queen Mary. In the beginning of her reign, in a sermon at Paul's cross, he exhorted the people steadfastly and perseveringly to adhere to that doctrine, which they had been taught, and to beware of pestilent popery, idolatry, and superstition. His zeal could not long be unnoticed; and accordingly he was soon called before the privy council, where he answered so scripturally, sensibly, and boldly, and at the same time in so becoming a manner, that, for that time, he was dismissed. But, after the Queen's proclamation against the preaching of the truth came forth, he was again called before the Popish bishops, (who thirsted for his blood,) and committed prisoner to his own house; from whence he might easily have escaped, and to which indeed he had many inducements; viz. his wife and ten children, his many friends in Germany, and the undoubted preferment he would there have met with; but being once called to answer in Christ's cause, he would not depart, though he stayed at the hazard, and, (as will be seen,) to the loss of his life.

After being confined a prisoner in his own house about six months, he was removed to Newgate, and there kept for a long time among thieves and murderers. At length, on the 22d, and several other days of January, in 1555, he was examined before Dr. Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and others, in a very illiberal and cruel man-

ner; they not permitting him to speak or answer for himself, nor yet to defend his doctrines in writing: and on the 29th of the same month, Gardiner and others pronounced sentence against him in the following manner: 'In the name of God, Amen. We Stephen, by the permission of God, bishop of Winchester, &c. do find that thou hast taught, holden, and affirmed, and obstinately defended divers errors, heresies, and damnable opinions, contrary to the doctrine and determination of the holy church; as namely these; "That the Catholic church of Rome is the church of Antichrist: *Item*, that in the sacrament of the altar there is not, substantially nor really, the natural body and blood of Christ." We do therefore judge thee and condemn thee, *John Rogers*, otherwise called *Matthews*, (thy demerits and faults being aggravated through thy damnable obstinacy,) as guilty of most detestable heresies, and as an obstinate impenitent sinner, refusing to return to the lap and unity of the HOLY MOTHER CHURCH, and that thou hast been and art by law excommunicate; and do pronounce and declare thee to be an excommunicated person. Also we pronounce and declare thee, being an heretic, to be cast out from the church, and left unto the judgment of the secular power, by this our sentence definitive, which we here lay upon and against thee, with sorrow of heart.'

When this sentence was read, Mr. Rogers again attempted to speak; but was not suffered. He then asked of them to permit his wife, a poor stranger, to see him before he suffered; but this also was denied, and she was absolutely forbidden. When he was taken back to prison, after this

and every preceding day's examination, he wrote down the questions put to him, and his answers, as far as they would allow him to speak, and also what he would have said, had he been permitted; which, because of their length, we cannot, consistent with our plan, insert; but must refer those who wish to see them at large, to Fox's martyrology. Yet, on account of their excellency, we presume it will be acceptable to our readers in general to see so much of them as may serve for a specimen of the true wisdom, piety, and zeal of this great and good man.

"But here, (says he,) they will cry out; Lo, these men will be still a John Baptist, an apostle, a prophet, &c.—I answer, We make not ourselves like unto them, in the gifts and power of God bestowed on them to the working of miracles, and the like; but that we are like them in believing the same doctrine, and in suffering persecution and shame for the same. We preach their very doctrine, and none other. This we are able to prove from their writings, which I have proffered to do again and again by writing. And, for this cause, we suffer the like reproach, shame, and rebuke of the world; suffering the same persecution, to the loss of our goods, and even of our lives; and to the forsaking, (as our master Christ commandeth,) father, mother, sister, brethren, wives, children, &c. being assured of a joyful resurrection, and to be crowned in glory with them, according to the infallible promises made unto us in Christ, our only and all-sufficient Mediator, Reconciler, Priest, and Sacrifice: Who, for us as well as them, hath pleased the Father, quieted and pacified his wrath

against our sins; and by imputation, hath made us without spot or wrinkle in his sight; although we, of and in ourselves, are polluted with many filthy sins, which, if the measureless, unspeakable mercy and love of God in Christ did not put away, by not imputing them to us, would have brought us to everlasting damnation, and death perpetual.—In this, and in no other sense, do we affirm ourselves to be like Christ our head, his apostles, prophets, martyrs, and saints. And so far ought *all* Christians to be like them, according to the measure of faith, and the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit, that God hath given unto them.

“But let us now consider, that, if it be God’s good will and pleasure to give the members of his beloved church into the hands of their enemies, it is to chasten, try, and prove them, to bring them to an unfeigned acknowledgment of their natural perverseness and disobedience towards God and his commandments, as touching their love of God, their brethren, and neighbours; and to show them their natural inclination and readiness to seek their own ease and pleasure; and to desire that good from the creature which God has forbid, as only to be found in himself. And in order that, having fallen into gross outward sins, like David, Peter, and others, they may be brought to a true and earnest repentance, and to sigh and cry for the forgiveness of the same, and for the aid of the spirit daily to mortify and subdue all evil desires and affections in future. And many other wise and gracious purposes of the Lord concerning his people are answered by their being often put into the furnace of affliction. But let us

also consider what he doth with those enemies into whose hands he giveth his tender darlings to be chastened and tried. In truth, he doth but chasten and cross them for a little while, according to his fatherly love and good pleasure, as all fathers do their children, (*Heb. xii. and Prov. iii.*) but he utterly destroyeth, yea, and everlastingly damneth their impenitent enemies.

“Let Herod tell me what he got by killing James, and by persecuting Peter, and Christ’s tender darlings and beloved spouse, his church? Verily God thought him not worthy to have death ministered by men or angels, or any other creature, than those small, filthy vermin, lice and worms, which were ordained to destroy his beastly, tyrannous body. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, with all their pride and might, must at length let God’s favourite people go freely out of their land, from their bands and cruelty: for when they could obtain nothing but counterfeit mercies, like those of our day,* namely, extreme cruelties and death, then did God arise, as one awoke out of sleep, and destroyed those enemies of his flock with a mighty hand, and stretched out arm. When Pharaoh grievously oppressed the poor Israelites with intolerable labours and heavy burdens, his courtiers noised abroad his tender mercies towards them, in suffering them to live in their land, and in setting them to work, that they might get their livings; for if he should thrust them out of his land, they must be no better than vagabonds

* Alluding to their frequent expressions of great sorrow and concern for him in the course of his examination, and in the sentence pronounced against him.

and runagates. Have we not the like examples now-a-days? O that I had now time to write certain things pertaining to the bishop of Winchester's mercy! I have not time to speak how *merciful* he hath been to me and to my good brethren, and to the duke of Suffolk's most innocent daughter, and her innocent husband. O that I had time to paint it in its proper colours! but there are many who can do it better than I, who shall live when I am dead. Pharaoh had his plagues; and his once most flourishing land utterly destroyed, on account of hypocrisy and counterfeit mercy, which was no other than cruelty and abominable tyranny. And think ye, that the bloody, butcherly, bishop of Winchester, and his bloody brethren, shall escape? Or that England for their offences, and especially for the maintenance of their idolatry, and wilful following of them in it, shall not abide as great brunts? Yes, undoubtedly.

"If God look not mercifully upon England, the seeds of utter destruction are already sown in it by these hypocritical tyrants, and antichristian prelates, papists, and double traitors to their country. And yet they speak of mercy, of blessing, of the catholic church, of unity, of power, and of strengthening the realm. This double dissimulation will appear in the day of the Lord's visitation, when those crown-shorn captains, who have shown no mercy to the poor godly sufferers of this realm, shall have judgment without mercy."*

*In the course of Mr. Rogers' first day's examination, Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, asked him;—"What sayest thou? Make us a direct answer, whether thou wilt be one of this Catholic church or not, with us, in the

Mr. Rogers being sentenced to be burned, and remanded back to prison, was on Monday morning, the fourth day of February, 1555, awakened out of a very sound sleep, with great difficulty, by the keeper's wife, who suddenly warned him to make haste and prepare himself for the fire. "If it be so, said he, I need not tie my points."—He was then had down to bishop Bonner, who degraded him; of whom, (he said,) he had one favour to ask. Bonner asked what that should be: "Nothing," answered Mr. Rogers, but that I may speak a few words to my wife before my burning." This request not being granted; he added, "You declare your charity, what it is." The time being come, he was brought out of Newgate, and delivered up to the sheriffs of London, to be taken to Smithfield; one of whom said, 'Mr. Rogers, will you revoke your abominable doctrine, and your evil opinion of the sacrament of the altar?' Mr. Rogers answered, "That which I have preached, I will seal with my blood." 'Then, (said the sheriff,) thou art an heretic.' "That shall be known, (replied Mr. Rogers,) at the day of judgment." 'Well, (said the sheriff,) I will never pray for thee.' "But I will pray for you," said Mr. Rogers; and so they proceeded towards Smithfield; Mr. Rogers

state which we are now?" To which Mr. Rogers answered, "My lord, I cannot believe that ye yourselves do think in your hearts, that he [the Pope,] is supreme head in forgiving of sin, &c. as ye have now said, seeing *you* and *all* the bishops of the realm have now for twenty years long preached, and some of you also written to the contrary; and the parliament hath so long ago condescended unto it."—Here he was interrupted, and not allowed to say any more.

saying the 51st Psalm, and the people exceedingly rejoicing and giving thanks to God for his constancy. His wife and ten children by her side, with one at her breast, met him by the way, being the only opportunity they had even of seeing one another any more in the flesh; but neither did this very affecting scene seem in the least to shake his confidence; so graciously was he supported in the trying hour, by HIM who hath promised, *I will never, never leave thee; never, never forsake thee.* When he came to the stake, he showed great constancy and patience; but, not being suffered to speak many words, he briefly exhorted the people steadily to remain in that faith and true doctrine, which he had before taught them, and for the confirmation of which he was not only content patiently to suffer all such bitterness and cruelty as had been already shown him, but also, most gladly to resign up his life, and to give up his flesh to the consuming fire, for a testimony of the same. They then again brought him a pardon, upon condition that he would recant; but he, with the magnanimity of a true martyr, refused it; not preferring life upon such terms, to the cruel death of burning; which he suffered with the greatest patience and fortitude; washing as it were his hands in the flames, and ejaculating with his last breath; "Lord, receive my spirit!"

It is remarked of Mr. Rogers, that during the year and a half that he was imprisoned, he was always cheerful, but very earnest and intent upon every thing he did. He wrote much; especially his examinations, which were wonderfully preserved: For they frequently made diligent

search for his writings; and it is supposed, that they refused his wife visiting him, lest she should convey them away. And when he was taken out of Newgate and led to Smithfield, they again searched his room; but found nothing. They, therefore, readily admitted his wife and son Daniel into his apartment, upon their return from Smithfield, who looked in every corner, as they thought, and were coming away, supposing others had been before hand with them, when Daniel spied something black in a dark corner under a pair of stairs, which proved to be his examinations and writings, to which the reader has been already referred in Fox's martyrology, where they are inserted at large. He was charitable to the poor prisoners, agreeing with Mr. Hooper and others to take but one meal a day, and to give the rest to those on the other side of the prison that were ready to die for hunger; but the cruel keeper withheld it from them. The Sunday before he suffered, he drank to Mr. Hooper, being then underneath him, and desired them to commend him unto him, and to tell him, "There was never a little fellow would better stick to a man, than he would stick to him;" supposing, contrary to what happened, that they should have been both burned together.— Thus died, triumphant in the faith, this blessed proto-martyr, and proved the reality of the ancient observation, 'that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church;' for, instead of being intimidated, multitudes were encouraged by his example, and those who had no religion before, were put upon inquiries; *What was the cause for which such pious and learned men were contented to*

die? and so, from being atheists or papists, they were led, by God's blessing, to a knowledge and profession of that gospel, the darkening of which was the main end and design of all this bloody persecution.

No one is justified in sitting still until he knows more. Let present duty be influenced by the truth which is at present known. But, then, it must be a *truth*; for otherwise, the principles opposed to the Gospel are exercised and strengthened by it. A man who performs the external duties of life strictly, who is a liberal contributor to the necessities of

others, and who attends divine ordinances regularly, with the expectation, expressed or understood, of thus creating to himself a claim on the favour of God, and a plea for the pardon of his past sins, is hourly strengthening a principle in most direct opposition to the cross of Christ, and is hourly becoming more inaccessible to the glad tidings of salvation. It is quite absurd to recommend to such a man to go on in this course, with hope that his faithful walking will be rewarded by farther light. The farther he advances on that road, so much the deeper is he involved in condemnation and darkness, and the more unlikely is it that he will ever return. *Erskine.*

Ordinations and Installations.

Feb 3,—REV. MOSES INGALLS was installed Pastor of the Congregational Church in Barnard, Vt.; and on the same occasion, Rev. PRESTON TAYLOR was ordained as an Evangelist. Sermon by Rev. Ammi Nichols, of Braintree.

Feb. 21,—REV. GEORGE W. ELLIOT was ordained pastor of the 2d Church in Lenox, N. Y. Sermon by Rev. John D. Pierce, of Sangerfield.

March 8, Rev. ISAAC R. BAR-

BOUR was ordained Pastor of the Congregational Church in New Ipswich, N. H. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Fay, of Charlestown, Mass.

March 8,—REV. OREN BROWN was ordained Pastor of the 2d Congregational Church in Hardwick, Vt. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Worcester, of Peacham.

April 19,—REV. AUSTIN DICKINSON was ordained at Amherst, Ms. as an Evangelist. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Humphrey, President of Amherst College.

Poetry.

From the Christian Spectator.

SOLITUDE.

A MOUNTAIN lies along the clear cold west,
Treeless and shrubless, like the smooth bald head
Of comfortless old age; and on its top,
Swept clean by wintry winds, the evening star
Lights up its cheerful rays:—and yet it seems
Lonely and fallen from the neighbourhood
Of sister stars. Each night, when all the heavens
Are lighted up above with clustering fires,

It takes its constant stand and vigils keeps
Close by the bleak and barren mountain top.
I wonder that it does not flee away
From that unseemly dwelling-place, and join
In happy concert with the train above.

And yet, mild star,
I would not have thee go, for thou dost seem
The semblance of myself. I too, alone,
On the bleak bosom of this barren world,
Light up my wintry fire,—sole counsellor,
Sole partner too of all my joys and cares.
For I have learn'd, from many a bitter proof,
That sin has rendered false the heart of man.
Unstable as the ever changing tide :—selfish
And prone to selfishness ; what careth he
For joy of others, or for others' woe ?
How little skill'd in ministering relief
To wounded sensibility, the common mass :
How much inclined to violate the trust
In unsuspecting confidence reposed.—
And I have learn'd the end of noisy mirth,
With all the hollow joys the world can give.

Then why forsake
This soothing wisdom-teaching solitude,
And mingle in the throng of joyous men—
Joyous and ruined ? Rather let me keep
Conceal'd from mortal sight my joys and woes,
And hold still converse with the Sovereign Lord
Of heaven and earth, and pour into *His* ear
Each rapt emotion, each consuming grief.

Then tarry where thou art, mild star of eve ;
Brief is thy dwelling on the mountain top,
And brief my sojourn in this barren world.
A little more, we both shall flee away :
I to the concert of the blessed above—
So hope deceive me not—and thou—with all
The high-sphered family from which thou seem'st
An exile—thou shalt fall no more to rise—
In terror shalt thou fall, and thy bright rays
Shall be extinguish'd in the burning day
That flashes from thy Maker's chariot wheels.

CLIFTON.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND READERS.

The Poetical effusion of C—Remarks on “The Exclusive System,” by an anonymous writer—and P—are received.

In our last number, p. 116, 2d col. 10th l. from bottom, for ‘*solution*,’ read *selection*. Page 117, 1st col. 2d l. from bottom, and 2d col. 4th l. from top, for ‘*conception*,’ read *corruption*.

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